

Message Text

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PAGE 01 TEGUCI 02970 101802Z

44

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 ARAE-00 CU-02 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00

INRE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 AID-05 PC-01

OMB-01 OPR-02 /061 W

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O R 101737Z JUL 75

FM AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 592

INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

USCINCSO

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, HO

SUBJECT: CHURCH-STUDENT TALKS WITH CHIEF OF STATE MELGAR

REF: TEGUCIGALPA (A) 2962, (B) 2960

BEGIN SUMMARY: CHIEF OF STATE MELGAR RECEIVED A COMMITTEE OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS HEADED BY THE VICE RECTOR ON JULY 9. ACCORDING TO THE VICE RECTOR MELGAR PROMISED TO CLARIFY THE OLANCHO SITUATION AND TO PUNISH THE GUILTY. MELGAR ALSO MET WITH A CHURCH DELEGATION HEADED BY ARCHBISHOP SANTO JULY 9. SANTOS STATED THAT MELGAR HAD PROMISED THEM THAT ALL THE WEIGHT OF THE LAW WOULD FALL ON THOSE GUILTY OF CRIMES IN OLANCHO. A SPECIAL COMMITTEE MADE UP OF HIGH-RANKING MILITARY OFFICERS WAS NOMINATED TO CARRY OUT A DEFINITIVE INVESTIGATION OF THE OLANCHO DISTURBANCES. RADIO BROADCASTS ON THE MORNING OF JULY 10 STATED THAT SEVERAL CIVILIAN AND MILITARY PERSONNEL HAD BEEN TAKEN INTO CUSTODY

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PAGE 02 TEGUCI 02970 101802Z

AND WERE BEING BROUGHT TO TEGUCIGALPA INCLUDING THE OLANCHO

COMMANDER, MAJOR JOSE ENRIQUE CHINCHILLA. END SUMMARY.

1. A "MARCH OF SILENCE" BY UNIVERSITY STUDENTS TOOK PLACE ON THE AFTERNOON OF JULY 9. THE MARCH WAS MADE BY SEVERAL HUNDRED STUDENTS THROUGH THE STREETS OF THE CAPITAL TO THE PRESIDENTIAL PALACE. THE GROUP DISBURSED AFTER SEVERAL IMPROMPTU SPEECHES WERE MADE. IT HAD TAKEN PLACE BECAUSE OF STUDENT CONCERN ABOUT THE REPORTED DEATHS OF TWO WOMEN AND A PRIEST IN THE OLANCHO DISTURBANCES (SEE REFTEL A).

2. THE FEDERATION OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS (FEUH) HAD ISSUED A DECLARATION CALLING ON THE GOVERNMENT TO DETERMINE THE WHEREABOUTS OF THE MISSING PEOPLE AND DEMANDING THE RELEASE OF PRISONERS. IN A SURPRISE MOVE, CHIEF OF STATE MELGAR INVITED A DELEGATION FROM THE UNIVERSITY TO HIS OFFICE ON JULY 9. THE DELEGATION WAS HEADED BY THE VICE RECTOR, MARCO VIRGILIO CARIAS. AFTER THE INTERVIEW, CARIAS TOLD THE PRESS THAT THE RESULTS OF THE MEETING WERE POSITIVE AND THAT HE EXPECTED ADDITIONAL MEETINGS WITH THE GOVERNMENT TO DETERMINE WHAT HAPPENED IN OLANCHO ON JUNE 25. CARIAS SAID THAT IT WAS NECESSARY TO DETERMINE THE WHEREABOUTS OF THE MISSING PEOPLE AND RELEASE PRISONERS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. HE SAID THEY HAD MELGAR'S WORD THAT THE SITUATION WOULD BE CLARIFIED AND THE GUILTY PUNISHED.

3. A CHURCH DELEGATION HEADED BY THE ARCHBISHOP OF TEGUCIGALPA, ENRIQUE SANTOS, HAD A FOUR HOUR MEETING WITH MELGAR THE EVENING OF JULY 9. ON LEAVING THE PRESIDENTIAL PLACE AT MIDNIGHT, SANTOS TOLD REPORTERS THE MEETING GAVE HOPE FOR THE SOLUTION OF EXISTING PROBLEMS. HE SAID MELGAR HAD TOLD THEM THAT ALL THE WEIGHT OF THE LAW WOULD FALL ON THE GUILTY. SANTOS ALSO SAID THERE IS POSITIVE PROOF CONCERNING THE GUILTY PARTIES INVOLVED IN THE EVENTS IN OLANCHO. THE CHURCH'S INVESTIGATING COMMITTEE HAS NOT YET PUBLICLY RELEASED ITS REPORT.

4. IT WAS ALSO ANNOUNCED ON THE EVENING OF JULY 9 THAT A "BLUE RIBBON" COMMITTEE OF HIGH RANKING MILITARY OFFICERS HAD BEEN NAMED TO CARRY OUT A DEFINITIVE INVESTIGATION OF THE OLANCHO DISTURBANCES. COLONEL OMAR ZELAYA REYES, HEAD OF LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 TEGUCI 02970 101802Z

THE NATIONAL POLICE (FSP), WILL HEAD THE COMMITTEE. RADIO BROADCASTS ON THE MORNING OF JULY 10 ANNOUNCED THAT SEVERAL CIVILIANS AND MILITARY PERSONNEL HAD BEEN TAKEN INTO CUSTODY AND WERE BEING BROUGHT TO TEGUCIGALPA FOR DETENTION. REPORTEDLY MAJOR JOSE ENRIQUE CHINCHILLA, COMMANDER IN OLANCHO, WAS ONE OF THOSE ARRESTED. CHINCHILLA IS NOT THE SON OF THE MINISTER OF DEFENSE AS REPORTED IN REFTEL B.

5. COMMENT: AS POINTED OUT IN REFTEL B, IT WAS CLEAR THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAD TO ACT. A CONTINUANCE OF THE PRESENT CLIMATE OF SUSPICION COULD DO LITTLE BUT MAKE THE GOVERNMENT APPEAR GUILTY OF ATTEMPTING TO "COVER UP" THE OLANCHO HAPPENINGS. THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT THE LT. COLONELS HAVE BEEN SHAKEN BY THE CHURCH ACCUSATIONS AND ARE CONCERNED ABOUT ITS EFFECT ON THE MILITARY'S IMAGE. THE PRESTIGE OF THE GOVERNMENT WILL SUFFER EVEN MORE IF THERE IS NOT A REASONABLY SATISFACTORY RESOLUTION OF THE PRESENT SITUATION. SANCHEZ

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